

the several members and organs is equally and exactly applicable to both species.

Bill to head as five to four : sometimes merely equal to the head : considerably depressed, except near the tip ; at base more than twice as broad as high ; straight ; culmen produced among the frontal feathers, which are soft and turned back ; sides of the maxilla cut out beyond the centre by a broad membranous and plumose fosse : tomia locked, trenchant, and entire ; towards the gape somewhat incurved—towards the tip, straight : tip of upper mandible inclined and notched ; of the lower, subrecurved and subemarginated, sometimes straight and entire. Nares nearer to the tip than to the gape ; at fore end of the nasal fossæ, lateral, longitudinal, elliptic, large, free, shaded above by a small nude process of the fossal membrane, and set over with tiny incumbent hairs : gape scarcely to the fore angle of the eye and subciliated : wings reaching to centre of tail, firm, first quill bastard, second long, fourth longest ; all four slightly emargined on their inner web. Tail composed of twelve firm feathers, rather longer than in *Turdus*, the four laterals gradated in a small degree, more than in *Turdus*.

Tarsi submedial, stout, rather longer than the central toe, usually smooth, sometimes crossed by three or four scales.

Toes simple, ambulatory, compressed, moderately unequal ; outer basally connected ; hind stouter and subdepressed.

Nails compressed, obtuse : the central fore with both margins dilated but entire.

Head furnished with a soft, full, garruling crest. Tongue simple, flat, medial, subcartilaginous, with cartilaginous, subjagged, tip. Stomach muscular, of medial subequal thickness, the lining tough and grooved. Intestinal canal 20 to 25 inches long, of subequal calibre throughout ; close to anal end, two grain-like cæcæ.

The intestines are longer in proportion than those of *Turdus* : but otherwise similar.

VI.—On a New Genus of the *Meropidæ*.—By the same.

Order INSESSORES ; Tribe FISSIROSTRES ; Family *Meropidæ*, Vigors.

Order PASSERES, Section SYNDACTYLI, Cuvier. Genus new. *Bucia*, Mihi.

Generic character :—

Bill much elongated and arched throughout, strong, greatly compressed ; the sides nearly vertical, and the ridge flattened towards the base. Wings moderate, full, not acuminate, fourth quill longest,

one and two considerably and subequally gradated. Nares entirely concealed by incumbent setaceous tufts. Tail longish, quadrate, strong. Feet and tongue as in *Merops*. In the family of the *Meropidæ* but one genus has heretofore been recognised. If the above characters be admitted to differ materially from those of *Merops*, and if the birds to which they apply are distinguished by a marked and consequent diversity of manners, I presume the propriety of the generic separation will not be questioned.

Now, the bee-eaters proper, according to my experience, have invariably a long and acuminate wing, and aerial swallow-like habits corresponding to that form of wing. Again, their bill is considerably spread laterally except towards the tip; the general form being tetragonal, and the ridge acute.

In *Bucia*, on the contrary, the wing is not so much acuminate as in the thrushes. It is distinguished for considerable, uniform, breadth; not at all for length; and the habits of the bird are quite foreign to perpetual questing on the wing in the open country: they lead it to seek the deep recesses of the forest,—and there, tranquilly seated on a high tree, to watch the casual advent of its prey, and, having seized it, to return directly to its station. The bill, again, is greatly compressed with vertical sides and ridge flat towards the base, convex towards the tip. This organ is, moreover, strong, longer, and more arched than in *Merops*. The *Buciæ* are of rare occurrence, and are solitary woodlanders; whereas the bee-eaters proper are gregarious, and common tenants of the champaign. Our birds are found in the lower and central regions of Nepal; but seldom or never in the northern. The Nipalese call them *Bukay-chera*; *chera* being merely a corruption of *chiria*, or bird. I latinise the former word to procure a generic appellation.

I have as yet discovered but one species, of which the following is the specific name and character.

*Bucia Nipalensis*. Nipalese *Bucia*, Mihi. Bright parrot green, shaded on the belly and vent with bright buff: lining of the wings and lower tail covert, pure buff: wings internally and basally, and tail on the inferior surface, the same: forehead and gular hackles, blue: the last, formed of a double series of long, composed, drooping plumes, ranged opposite to each other on either side the trachea: bill plumbeous, with black tip: iris brown: legs greenish yellow. Length thirteen to fourteen inches: breadth between the wings seven-teen to eighteen: weight three to four oz.: sexes alike.

The bill is more than twice as long as the head. It has a considerable and uniform arcuation throughout; is hard, strong, entire, very moderately excavated internally; at base scarcely broader than high;

and nearly twice as high as broad immediately beyond the base. The ridge above, though narrow, is quite flat from the brow to the centre of length; beyond it and below, convex. So great is the lateral compression, that the sides are plane and nearly vertical: the cutting edges are trenchant and unemarginated: the tips pointed and nearly equal. The nares are rounded, lateral, basal; the fossæ evanescent; the aperture covered closely by a small incumbent tuft of setaceous plumuli.

The tongue is long, flattened, pointed, cartilaginous, and feathered towards the tip. The gape is scarcely cleft to the fore angle of the eye, and smooth.

The wings are of very moderate length, but of great and pretty uniform fulness or breadth: the tertiaries and primaries equal: first and second primaries considerably and subequally gradated: third and fourth nearly equal. Fourth longest: first not bastard; more than half as long as the fourth.

The tail is rather long, and is composed of twelve very firm, broad, and equal feathers. The tarsi are very low: knees and more plumose: acrotarsia scaled: paratarsia smooth: toes long and typically syndactyle; the soles being quite flat, and the exterior toe joined to the central fore as far as the second joint—the interior, as far as the first.

Nails subequal, much compressed, falcate, feeble, and acute: the central fore with a large unpectinated comb. From the chin to the breast depends a row of plumes, inserted opposite to each other on either side the trachea. They are more than two inches long, of composed web, and medial equal breadth. Their mobility gives the living bird a very grotesque appearance. Some such appendage seems to distinguish one of the true bee-eaters, viz. that called *amictus*.

These birds feed principally on bees and their congeners: but they likewise consume great quantities of scarabæi and their like. They are of dull staid manners, and never quit the deepest recesses of the forest.

In the Rája's shooting excursions they are frequently taken alive by the clamorous multitude of sportsmen, some two or more of whom single out a bird and presently make him captive, disconcerted as he is by the noise. It may be worth while to add, in conclusion, that the true bee-eaters are never seen in the mountains: nor the *Bucia* ever, I believe, in the plains. The intestinal canal in our birds is usually about twelve inches long, with cæca of an inch and more in length, placed near to the bottom of it. The stomach is muscular, and of medial subequal thickness. Such, too, is the character of the stomach and intestines in *Merops*.